

FAMILY WORSHIP HELPS

WEEK 29

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

QUESTION 29: *How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?*

ANSWER: We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us by His Holy Spirit.



MONDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 103A

Scripture: Read Titus 3:1-7

Key Thought: *The Holy Spirit applies what Christ purchased for us.*

Questions:

- ☞ What two persons of the Godhead are mentioned in this question?
- ☞ What has Christ done? What does the Holy Spirit do?
- ☞ What does the word "effectual" mean?
- ☞ According to the catechism answer and Titus 3:5, who is active party in the salvation of sinners? Why is this important?

Prayer

Notes: This week's question deals with the application of redemption to the elect, which is the work of the Holy Spirit. The catechism is careful to emphasize the Biblical truth that the work of salvation, from start to finish, is the work of God alone. The whole reason that man needs to be saved is that his heart and mind have been corrupted by sin. This corruption causes man to look to himself instead of God in all things. Man's heart is so corrupt that he even can convince himself that he is looking to God when he is really trusting himself instead. This is sometimes the case with regard to salvation. The message of the Bible is that salvation is through Christ alone. Yet there are many who claim to be Christians but who maintain that all or part of their salvation depends not upon Christ but upon themselves. They mistakenly think that there is something that they must do in order to make the sacrifice of Christ apply to them. What they fail to see is that making any human action the condition for the application of Christ's saving work makes man himself the cause of his redemption and robs Christ of the glory which He alone deserves. For this reason, the *Catechism* emphasizes the truth that the application of the salvation purchased by Christ is the work of the Holy Spirit, rather than any "works of righteousness which we have done," so that all of the glory and praise may be His alone.

TUESDAY

Praise: Sing Psalm 103A

Scripture: Read John 1:1-14

Key Thought: *Salvation is not hereditary.*

Questions:

- ☞ What does it mean for someone to be your “blood relative”?
- ☞ What things are true of you because of the family you were born into?
- ☞ What does John mean when he says that Christians are children born “not of blood”?
- ☞ Should you assume that you are a Christian if your parents are?
- ☞ Have you made this assumption about yourself?

Prayer

Notes: In order to highlight the fact that redemption is exclusively the work of the Holy Spirit applying Christ's sacrifice, we will spend some time considering three of the most common substitutes that people tend to rely upon. The first of these is the common idea that salvation is somehow passed down by blood heredity from parents to children. This may seem like a silly idea at first reading, but it is a very common misconception among professing Christians throughout the visible church. Usually, it is not so much the result of a rational conclusion as it is an assumption. Parents prefer to think well of their children, and children (like all self-centered human beings) prefer to think well of themselves. These kinds of built-in tendencies foster the presumption that a child is a believer merely because he was raised in a church by Christian parents. But the Scriptures clearly warn that true children of God are not “born of blood” but rather are born “of God” (John 1:13). While it is a precious truth that covenant children are the recipients of many great blessings by virtue of God's promises to parents and children, this truth must never lead to the presumption that children of believers are automatically redeemed. Challenge your children to look to their own hearts before God and earnestly pray with them that the work of Christ will be applied personally to each one by the power by the Holy Spirit.

WEDNESDAY

Praise: Sing Psalm 103A

Scripture: Read John 1:1-14

Key Thought: *Salvation is not through the will of the flesh.*

Questions:

- ☞ What is the “will of the flesh”?
- ☞ If you were physically dead, could you will to move from one grave to another? Why not?
- ☞ Could you will to lift the Empire State Building over your head? Why not?

☞ Would you ordinarily choose to tear your eyes out of your head? Why not?

☞ Can any sinner will to receive salvation through Christ? Why not?

Prayer

Notes: According to God's Word, it is not the "will of the flesh" but the will of God that makes a person redeemed. The three questions above are designed to point out the problem of relying on the will of the flesh for salvation. One question points out that one who is dead cannot exercise his will, and all men are dead in sin apart from Christ. Another question shows that the exercise of the will is limited to what a person has the power and ability to do. Sinful men, being totally corrupt, do not have the ability to choose Christ. The third question points out that the exercise of the will is limited by the nature of a person. It is natural for a man to hate and shun pain and to protect himself from harm. This is why no one would ordinarily willfully harm themselves. Likewise, it is the nature of sinners to hate God and to cherish self-justification. The natural man, apart from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, is as unlikely to admit his sin and turn to Christ as a sane person is to tear out his own eyes. Help your children to see that it is the Spirit of God, and not the will of the flesh, that causes us to be born again.



THURSDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 103A

Scripture: Read John 1:1-14

Key Thought: *Salvation is not through the will of man.*

Questions:

☞ Can a person be forced to do something against their will?

☞ Do governments sometimes force people to change religions?

☞ Can a government, through force, change a person's actions?

☞ Can a government, through force, change a person's heart?

Prayer

Notes: John distinguishes between "the will of the flesh" and "the will of man." The redemption of God's children is the result of neither. The contrast is between the inner working of a man's own will (which we have seen is incapable of choosing Christ) and the outward working of someone else's will upon a person to change them by compulsion. Just as no man has the power within himself to make his dead heart come alive, neither does any man have the power to change the heart of another, though he may change his outward actions. There have been many examples in history of powerful men seeking to force others to change their religion, yet we are assured by God Himself that the new birth, without which no one will enter the kingdom of heaven, is not the result of the will of man, but the work of God alone. Closely connected with this truth is the fear of man as a motive for religious activity. Show your children that only God is to be feared and

that they must always examine themselves to be sure that they are not engaging in religious activity out of a fear of men or a desire to please them. *Soli Deo Gloria!* (To God alone be the glory!))



FRIDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 103A

Scripture: Read John 1:1-14; Titus 3:1-7

Key Thought: *Salvation is entirely of God.*

Questions:

- ☞ Does salvation depend on anything in man himself?
- ☞ Did Jesus die in order to make salvation possible for anyone who wanted to be saved? What is wrong with this statement?
- ☞ Is the work of Jesus Christ complete?
- ☞ Are we commanded to repent and believe? What must happen before we are able to do these things?

Prayer

Notes: There are many in the church today who believe that Jesus Christ accomplished only the *possibility* for people to be saved. They maintain that through His life, death, and resurrection, Jesus made salvation available to all. In order for this salvation to become real, according to this view, each person must exercise his own will to apply what Jesus has done for him. As we have seen this is *not* what the Bible teaches concerning salvation. No sinner naturally wants to be saved. No sinner is even capable of understanding that he is lost! Those who are saved must first be given new hearts by the Spirit of God. Only then, when we have been born, “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:13), are we able by His power in us to repent of our sins and believe in Christ. Emphasizing this is especially needed in our day, when so many believe that salvation is impossible apart from man’s effort in some form. The work of Christ is complete and needs no help from us to take root in our hearts. What is necessary is the work of the Holy Spirit in applying His completed work to the hearts of His chosen sheep.



Note: Only five lessons per week are included. You are encouraged to lead your family in worship seven days a week. On weekends, you may want to review or build upon the lessons from the previous week, discuss the sermon from Sunday morning, or work on questions from the Catechism or memory verses. These lesson suggestions are intended to provide a simple framework for parents to build upon. You are not limited to this content. The habit of morning and evening family worship is the biblical ideal. We hope you can use these lessons as a starting point for the development of a blessed practice of family worship in your home.